

Dear Friends,

Happy Thanksgiving to you all! And may our hope for the future lie in our gratitude for the present -- for all of the Earth protectors, the peace workers, the hearth keepers, the teachers, song makers, poets and mystical prophets.

I am back from the Mid East with so many stories to tell! I've had a difficult time, since my return, trying to figure out how to best honor all the people who shared their stories and have counted on me to tell their them. There is so much suffering, and Palestinians feel so invisible to the world. So I'll be telling their stories through words and songs and pictures. There are also the Israelis that I met who are some of the strongest advocates for Palestinians. I honor them, and will tell their stories as well.

Recently I gave my first public presentation, combining slides with three songs. Thanks to Marie Eaton and Tracy Spring, with whom I shared the evening, for their beautiful song weaving. I'm hoping to turn that presentation into a piece that I can put on my web site. It will be a week or two, but hopefully it will be there then.

At the link below you can see the photos from my journey. When you get to the site, scroll down to the first photo. Just below it, see "Detail View". Click on that and you will see both the photos and comments. At the bottom of the page, there are numbers for viewing more pictures. I'm offering my reflections, contacts, resources and information about some of the work that is being done there. I call this set of pictures "Pilgrimage." For me this was my first "call" since becoming ordained in August. For hundreds of years pilgrims would come to the holy places of this land. What I discovered there was much more than the religious sites. It was the people, their work and their stories that were sacred to me.

<http://www.flickr.com/gp/23128865@N00/32s3d9>

Jeremy Milgrom, a Jewish rabbi who works with Bedouins, spent hours showing me around a Bedouin village, introducing me to people, and telling me stories. As I thanked him for taking the time, he said, "We're investing in you." I felt strongly that everyone who gave me their stories were investing in me, and I take that very seriously. So please let me know if you would like to have a presentation in your town, maybe combined with a concert. It would be fun to create a workshop around this -- about the stories that are hidden and how they are revealed, and how we, as peacemakers, bring out those hidden stories. Just brainstorming here -- but I'd like the excuse to do some creating!

I do feel that presenting these images and songs needs to be just a beginning point. It is my fond hope that people will be moved to take action. Hope Flowers

School needs people to advocate for them, as Israelis attempt to confiscate more land around the school, and destroy more houses. Mordechai Vanunu could use strong international advocacy to bring him out of house arrest in Jerusalem. Jeremy Milgrom could use help in setting up a pre-school for Bedouins. Samih Abu Zakieh would like to take two children to the International Children's Art Festival in Washington D.C., and needs funds for that. Tent of Nations could use volunteers to come to the land on a hilltop near Bethlehem to keep it from being confiscated. It is an international youth meeting and peace education site. What else? Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) are in need of volunteers, to stand between soldiers and civilians. The Coalition of Women for Peace, which includes Women in Black, are in need of funds to continue their important work. They are asking people to participate in an international call to end the siege of Gaza, with demonstrations around the world on December 2nd.

If you'd like more info, let me know and I'll forward Gila's email. Politically, we need to hold our own government accountable for its Mid East policies which have so contributed to the suffering there. And of course, the Children of Abraham project, and Peace Builders, the project that inspired me to go to the Mid East, is in need of support. That project is under the direction of the remarkable Dr. Sis Levin.

Sis has asked me to create songs for the teacher's manual she's preparing for use in the schools. I'll be working on a grant to find funding for that. The kids were so amazing, and I loved singing with them! They give me so much hope for the future, as did their teachers and all of the amazing peace workers I met. But if I start telling more stories, I'll be on this computer for at least several more hours.

Coming up: I'll be starting a new Artist's Way class, meeting Thursdays beginning November 30th. Give me a call if you live near Bellingham and would like to learn to be more in touch with your creativity.

I'll be in Seattle at Haller Lake Center on March 10th. I'll combine that with a workshop on the 11th at the home of Stewart Hendrickson.

Other than that -- Yikes! The page is blank and I'll look to you to let me know if you'd like for me to come to your community, to visit a school, a church, or any group that comes to mind. I am bursting with songs and stories. And thanks to so many of you who helped me make this journey, and those of you who so warmly received me. I believe we can make a difference together.

On this stormy November night, I'll close with one of the songs I've written to accompany the slide show. I was inspired by the pictures the children drew at the Palestinian Child Arts Center.

Peace ~ Linda

Pictures ©2006 Linda Allen

I'd like to paint a picture  
So that everyone can see  
In a world of war and terror  
What is happening to me  
I'd like to paint a picture  
And make everything alright  
If I put it on the paper  
Maybe I can sleep at night

I'd like to paint a picture  
In colors bold and true  
I'd like to paint a picture  
And show it all to you

I'd like to paint a picture  
So you can see it through my eyes  
Tho you may not smell the gunfire  
Or hear the people cry.  
I'd like to paint a picture  
Tho my hands may shake a bit  
When I think about the things I've seen  
'Tho the world may never know it CHORUS

Bridge: A picture's worth a thousand words  
When smaller voices can't be heard  
My story told in bold design  
May peace find me in time

I'd like to paint a picture  
Of a dream I had today  
People gathering together  
To find a better way  
I'd like to paint a picture  
Of how the world can be  
When all the walls come tumblin' down  
When all of us are free CHORUS

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